



Women's role in society's reform

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All Praise is due to Allah, We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Allah, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I



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bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His servant, and His messenger. Allah has sent him with the guidance and true religion; hence he transmitted the message, guided the Umma (People), and sincerely fought in the way of Allah. Therefore, Allah's peace and prayers be upon him, his family, company and whoever follows him till the Day of Judgment.

I feel pleasure for being here to say my opinion in this important issue; women's role in society's reform.

After seeking help and guidance from Allah almighty; I would say that women's role in society's reform is an important one, because reforming society has two shapes:






The first shape is the outward society reform:

This shape is in the markets, mosques and other such places, and men do much in such places because they are the majority in these places.

The second shape is the inward society reform:

This shape is inside houses, and the responsibility of this shape is for women, because they spent most their times in the houses. Allah almighty says to the prophet's women: "And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify

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you with [extensive] purification.” [Al-Ahzab 33:33]

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ
{وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا
الأحزاب: 33}

Transliteration: Waqarna fee buyootikunna wala tabarrajna tabarruja
aljahiliyyati aloola waaqimna alssalata waateena alzzakata waatiAllaha
warasoolahu innama yureedu Allahu liyuthhiba AAankumu alrrijsa ahla albayti
wayutahirakum tatheeran

The importance of women's role in society's reform:

After what we have mentioned earlier; I think that it is ok to say that reforming half of the society, or more, is the responsibility of women.

The first reason:

Women are equal to men in the numbers, if they were not more; I mean that most of Adam's children are women according to the sayings of the prophet, although the numbers differ from one country to another and from one period of time to another (women may be more than men in some countries while less in another countries, also they may be more than men in some period of time and less in another period of time).

The second reason:

Generations growing start from the bosoms of women. This shows the importance of women role in reforming society.

Required qualifications for women:

Women must have specific qualifications to do their role in society reform. The following are some of these qualifications.

The first qualification is righteousness:

The woman must be righteous in order to be a good example for others. However, how could women be righteous? Every woman should keep in mind that she would never be righteous without knowledge. I mean by "knowledge" the Shariah knowledge, which she would receive from books (if she can) or from the tongues of the scholars, whether they are men or women.

In this period, it is very easy for women to receive knowledge directly from the tongues of scholars through the recorded tapes. These tapes have great role in directing the society to the righteousness, if they are used for this purpose.

Therefore; knowledge is a qualification for women's righteousness, because there is no righteousness without knowledge.

The second qualification is eloquence:

I mean that Allah almighty may bestow eloquence upon her to be able to accurately express herself. There are many people may have things to talk about

but they could not do (or do wrongly) for not having eloquence, hence they do not achieve their purposes_ reforming the manners.

Therefore; we ask, how could she achieve eloquence and express herself accurately?

The answer is acquiring Arabic linguistic knowledge by attending Arabic lessons enable her to express herself accurately to whomever she addresses.

The third qualification is wisdom:

The woman must be wise in preaching and teaching other women in addition to having wisdom in choosing what to say and when to say it, as it is narrated by the people of knowledge. Having wisdom is one of Allah's favors to his/her slave. Allah almighty says: "He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good." [Al-Baqarah 2:269]

{يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا}
البقرة: 269

Transliteration: Yutee alhikmata man yashao waman yuta alhikmata faqad ootiya khayran katheeran

How many purposes had been lost because of not having wisdom! Wisdom in preaching to the way of Allah almighty is including addressing people according to their status. If the addressed was ignorant, s/he would be treated with according to the level of his/her knowledge. However, if s/he was having

knowledge but does not put his/her knowledge in action because of recklessness or not caring, s/he should be treated in another way. On the other hand; if s/he was having knowledge but s/he is arrogant, s/he should be treated in a different way.

Therefore, people are three levels; ignorant, know but are reckless and know but are arrogant. We cannot address them all by the same level. Instead; we should deal with every one according to his status. When the prophet (peace be upon him) sent Moaaz to the people of Yemen, he said to him: "You will come to people of book." [Narrated by Mulsim]

«إِنَّكَ تَأْتِي قَوْمًا أَهْلَ كِتَابٍ»

رواه مسلم

The prophet, peace be upon him, said that to Moaaz in order to know their status, be ready according to the necessities of this status, and address them according to it.

Examples of wisdom in preaching:

There are examples of wisdom in calling people to the way of Allah had occurred from the wisest person (Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him). These examples include the following:

The first example; the desert Arab who urinated in the mosque:

Bukhari, Muslim and others reported that Anas b. Malik said: While we were in

the mosque with Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him), a desert Arab came and stood up and began to urinate in the mosque. The Companions of Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: Stop, stop, but the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Don't interrupt him; leave him alone. They left him alone, and when he finished urinating, He (the narrator) said that he (the Prophet) then gave orders to one of the people who brought a bucket of water and poured it over. Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) then called the desert Arab and said to him: These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth, but are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an, or Allah's Messenger said something like that. [Narrated by Muslim]

بينما نحن في المسجد مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذ جاء أعرابي فقام يبول في المسجد فقال أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مه مه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا تزرموه دعوه فتركوه حتى بال ثم إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم دعاه فقال له إن هذه المساجد لا تصلح لشيء من هذا البول ولا القذر إنما هي لذكر الله عز وجل والصلاة وقراءة القرآن أو كما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال فأمر رجلا من >> القوم فجاء بدلو من ماء فبشبهه عليه رواه مسلم

Imam Ahmed, may Allah mercy him, narrated that this desert Arab said: "O Allah, mercy me and Muhammad and do not mercy any body with us."

We deduce the following lessons from this story:

The first lesson:

The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, tried to stop the desert Arab, and shouted at him. We learn from this that it is not permissible to forgive an evil; instead one should prevent it. However, if preventing the evil was to lead to more dangerous evil, then it is necessary to be patient till the more dangerous evil is eliminated. That is why the prophet, peace be upon him, prevented them from stopping the desert Arab or shouting at him.

The second lesson:

The prophet, peace be upon him, forgave the evil to prevent more dangerous evil. The evil that the prophet, peace be upon him, forgave was letting the desert Arab continue his urinating. And the more dangerous evil that he had prevented by forgiving the first evil was that if this desert Arab stood up, one of the following could occur:

1. He would either stand up without covering his private parts in order not to pollute his clothes, and this would result in more polluting to the mosque in addition to uncovering the man's private parts.
2. Or he would stand up in another way covers his private parts but pollutes his clothes by some urine.

Because of these two more dangerous evils the prophet, peace be upon him, let him continue his urinating. This evil (urinating in the mosque) had initially occurred; and if he had stood up, it would not be eliminated. We understand from this; that if the evil thing was to lead only to more dangerous evil, then it is obligatory to forgive it in order to prevent the more dangerous evil by the

less one.

The origin of this is in the book of Allah almighty. He almighty says: "And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge." [Al-Anam 6:108]

{وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ}
الأنعام: 108

Transliteration: Wala tasubboo allatheena yadAAoona min dooni Allahi
fayasubboo Allaha AAadwan bighayri AAilmin

We all know that insulting the disbelievers' gods is desirable to Allah almighty. However, Allah almighty prevented us from insulting their gods (in the above mentioned verse) because insulting them was to lead to insulting Allah almighty.

The third lesson:

The prophet, peace be upon him, eliminated the evil quickly, because delaying has consequences. It was possible for the prophet, peace be upon him, to delay purifying this spot of the mosque till people need to pray in it; however it is better to quickly eliminate the evil lest forgetting or lacking ability. This is an important issue. If (for example) a piece of garment had been polluted, it would have been purified; whether you pray in it or not lest you forget or do not be able to purify it in the future for not finding water or for any other reason.

That is why when a child was brought to the prophet (peace be upon him), and

he put it in his lap, then it urinated over the lap of the prophet (peace be upon him), the prophet (peace be upon him) asked for water and splashed it over the urine. He did not delay this till the time of prayer for the above mentioned reasons.

The fourth lesson:

The prophet, peace be upon him, told the desert Arab the purposes of the mosques and that they are built only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer and the recitation of the Qur'an, or as he peace be upon him said: "These mosques are not the places meant for urine and filth."

«لا يصلح فيها شيء من الأذى والقذر»

Hence, mosques must be glorified, cleaned, purified and used for worshipping Allah almighty by the remembrance of Him, prayer, the recitation of the Qur'an and such things.

The fifth lesson:

If the person called others by wisdom, kindness and leniency s/he would gain more than what s/he might gain by violence. This desert Arab had totally convinced by the prophet's teachings, he even said his famous phrase "O Allah, mercy me and Muhammad and do not mercy anybody with us."

The prophet, peace be upon him, dealt with this man in kindness and leniency because he was ignorant; no one knows the holiness of mosques could urinate

in them.

The second example; the companion who had sexual intercourse with his wife while fasting:

Al-Bukhary reported that Abu Huraira narrated that a man came to the prophet, peace be upon him, and said, "O Allah's Apostle! I have been ruined." Allah's Apostle asked what was the matter with him. He replied "I had sexual intercourse with my wife while I was fasting." (This is a prohibited sin. However, let's see how the prophet peace be upon him dealt with the man. Did he dressed him down or scolded him? No, because he came for repentance not for mocking) Allah's Apostle asked him, "Can you afford to manumit a slave?" He replied in the negative. Allah's Apostle asked him, "Can you fast for two successive months?" He replied in the negative. The Prophet asked him, "Can you afford to feed sixty poor persons?" He replied in the negative. The Prophet kept silent and while we were in that state, a big basket full of dates was brought to the Prophet. He asked, "Where is the questioner?" He replied, "I (am here)." The Prophet said (to him), "Take this (basket of dates) and give it in charity." The man said, "Should I give it to a person poorer than I? By Allah; there is no family between its (i.e. Medina's) two mountains who are poorer than I." The Prophet smiled till his pre-molar teeth became visible and then said, 'Feed your family with it.'

بينما نحن جلوس عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذ جاءه رجل فقال يا رسول الله هلكت
قال ما لك قال وقعت على امرأتي وأنا صائم فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هل تجد
رقبة تعتقها قال لا قال فهل تستطيع أن تصوم شهرين متتابعين قال لا فقال فهل تجد إطعام
ستين مسكينا قال لا قال فمكث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فبينما نحن على ذلك أتى النب

ي صلى الله عليه وسلم بعرق فيها تمر والعرق المكتل قال أين السائل فقال أنا قال خذها فتصدق به فقال الرجل أعلى أفقر مني يا رسول الله فوالله ما بين لابتيتها يريد الحرتين أهل بيت أفقر من أهل بيتي فضحك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى بدت أنيابه ثم قال >>أطعمه أهلك

رواه البخاري

We understand, from this story, many lessons including; the prophet peace be upon him did not dress the man down or scold him, because he came for repentance. There is a difference between an arrogant man and another came for repentance and help. That is why the prophet peace be upon him dealt with him in this way and returned him back to his family with the booty that he gave him; the dates that he was to feed to sixty poor persons if he was not poor.

The third example; the man who sneezed in the prayer:

Mu'awiya b. al-Hakam said: While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), a man in the company sneezed. I said: Allah have mercy on you! The people stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said: Woe be upon me, why is it that you stare at me? They began to strike their hands on their thighs, and when I saw them urging me to observe silence (I became angry) but I said nothing. When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had said the prayer, he called me and said: "Talking to persons is not fitting during the prayer, for it consists of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness and recitation of the Qur'an." or words to that effect.

صليت مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فعطس رجل من القوم فقلت يرحمك الله>> فرماني القوم بأبصارهم فقلت واكمل أمياه ما شأنكم تنظرون إلي فجعلوا يضربون بأيديهم على

أفخاذهم فعرفت أنهم يصمتوني...ثم قال إن هذه الصلاة لا يحل فيها شيء من كلام الناس هذا
>>إنما هو التسبيح والتكبير وقراءة القرآن

ابو داود

Mu'awiya said: I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than he for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom. I swear that he did not scold, beat or revile me.

The fourth example; the man who was wearing a gold signet ring:

We take this example from the story of the man who was wearing a gold signet ring in his hand after males were prohibited by the prophet peace be upon him from wearing gold. The prophet peace be upon him said: "One of you is wishing live coal from Hell and put it on his hand." Then, he (the prophet peace be upon him) pulled it off and threw it away. It was said to the person after Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) had left: Take your signet ring (of gold) and derive benefit out of it. Whereupon he said: No, by Allah, I would never take it when Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) has thrown it away.

يعمد أحدكم إلى جمرة من نار فيضعها في يده، ثم نزع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الخاتم>>
بنفسه، ورمى به فلما انصرف النبي قيل للرجل: خذ خاتمك وانتفع به، فقال: والله لا آخذ خاتماً
>>طرحه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

رواه مسلم

We see some rigidity in the prophet's dealing with this man. That is because it is clear that this man knew about the prohibition of wearing gold for males, therefore the prophet peace be upon him dealt with him bitter than his dealing

with the above mentioned person.

Hence the preacher must deal with every person according to his status; there is an ignorant person, one knows but is reckless and one knows but is arrogant.

The fourth qualification is well breeding:

The woman must breed her children well, because they are the future's men and women. Children see their mom at the first instance. So, if she has good manners and behaves well, and her children have been brood by her, they will have great influence in society's reform.

Therefore, the woman who has children must take care of her children and breed them well. If she was not able to do this alone, she could seek help from their father or from close relative (if their father was not present).

Women must not surrender by saying 'All people are doing this, so I can do nothing different'. If we did so, there will never be reform. Reform means to change to the better what has been ruined, and to change to the better what is good.

Moreover, surrender is not acceptable in Islam. When Allah almighty had sent his messenger (peace be upon him) to pagans worship statues and kill and mistreat each other, the prophet peace be upon him did not surrendered and Allah did not allow him to surrender. Instead, Allah almighty said: "Then declare what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists." [Al-Hijr 15:94]

{ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ }

الحجر: 94

Transliteration: FaisdaAA bima tumaru waaAArid AAani almushrikeena

And that is what the prophet, peace be upon him, did. A person could say 'yes, it is wise to change, but it should be gradually changing because the society is away from what we want.' Hence, it is important to start from the most important and most urgent issues and step gradually to the less important and less urgent issues till achieving the desired goal.

The fifth qualification is to be active:

Women should have a role in educating their gender whether this is in schools, universities or post-graduation studies, or through the mutual visits.

We heard (and thanks to Allah) that some women have great role in this aspect. They had organized sessions for educating other women the shariah knowledge and Arabic language. Surly, this is a good effort women should be praised for it. Moreover the reward of such thing is permanent. The prophet, peace be upon him, said: "When a person dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased)."

>> إذا مات ابن آدم انقطع عمله إلا من ثلاث: صدقة جارية، أو علم ينتفع به، أو ولد صالح يدعو له>>

If the woman was active in calling for Allah in her society through the visits or

schools or other things, she would have great role and influence in reforming the society.

That is what I remember now about Women's role in society's reform and the qualifications of that role.

I invoke Allah almighty to make us righteous people guide others to righteousness, and we invoke Him to bestow His mercy upon us; indeed He is the Real Bestower.

And all praise is due to Allah (the lord of the worlds), and prayers be upon our prophet (Muhammad) and his family and his companions and whoever follows them till the day of resurrection.

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